

Dear Commissioners:

I live in Puyallup, Washington. In the last six months, I've lost more than \$20,000 playing Huuuge Casino (one of the most popular "social casino" games, along with Big Fish Casino). I'm planning to come to the hearing in Pasco on Thursday to tell you my story, but I wanted to send this letter first in case you don't have time to hear from me in Pasco.

Earlier this year I had back surgery and was laid up on the couch for a couple months. To pass the time, I downloaded the Huuuge Casino app. I have a history of casino gambling addiction (at the Muckleshoot and the Emerald Queen), and thought that using a "free" online casino would help me stop going to the "real" casinos. I thought it could be like Suboxone to a heroin addict or Chantix to a smoker. This was supposed to help me, not make me worse off. Boy, was I wrong.

Phone-based "social casino" games like Huuuge Casino are absolutely gambling. When you first download the app and start spinning the slots, it seems like everyone wins and plays for free for a little while. But after you play for a bit, everyone's "luck" seems to fade, and you run out of chips pretty quickly. Honestly, it seems like they can figure out once you are "hooked," and then they start making you lose so you have to keep buying chips.

At the start, the chip packages they offer cost \$.99 or \$1.99. But as you play more, the cheapest chip packages you can buy get more and more expensive. Within a month of starting to play, the cheapest "special" purchase I could make in Huuuge casino was for \$99.99. I even created new accounts just so I could buy smaller chip packages (instead of ones \$99.99 and up). But it seemed like as soon as they figured out that the new accounts were connected to my same Google or Facebook account, they knew they already had a sucker, so the chip packages got expensive and I'd lose quickly.

When I would ask Huuuge to block me from buying any more chips, they said they couldn't do that. I know I should have just stopped myself, but I was hooked. I still don't understand why they couldn't just block my account.

In my opinion, games like Huuuge are way more addictive than regular casinos. And I know – I've spent way too much time and money playing the slots at the "real" casinos. But Huuuge is worse: all you have to do to start gambling is to take out your phone. It lets me gamble at home, at work on breaks, morning, noon, night. I can't bring the Emerald Queen or the Muckleshoot Casino home with me or carry it around in my purse. But I can bring Huuuge with me anywhere. It's just too convenient.

Worse, I am absolutely certain that Huuuge knows once you're addicted, and changes the odds on you (to make you buy more chips) after they figure it out. On top of all that, the whole structure of VIP "clubs" adds to the addiction. You have to belong to a club to get any real amount of "free" chips. But in the end the clubs are just another way that you get pressured into buying more chips because you quickly get kicked out of your club if you aren't "contributing" enough on a daily basis.

This game has ruined me, both financially and emotionally. For months, I sat inside my house and did nothing but spin slots inside a phone game I was addicted to. I've spent every dollar to my name on that stupid game. When I look at my Google purchases and bank statements I am just disgusted with myself. But I know that I'm not alone, and I'm hoping that by speaking up I might help other people from going through what I have.

Online casinos like Huuuge aren't anything like normal games – even ones with in-app purchases like Candy Crush. Online casino games literally mimic the real casinos, both in terms of the look and feel and in terms of the games they offer (slots, roulette, blackjack, etc.). If they were not trying to mimic a casino, they wouldn't be making games that are identical to the same ones you find in the casinos. And they even call themselves casinos! Yet they want to say they that the games aren't "gambling." The truth is that these games are a perfect way for companies like Huuuge to lure in the weak and hope to get someone with money. Basically, if it looks like a casino, functions like a casino, makes games just like the casino, is named as a casino, takes money like a casino, destroys someone financially and emotionally like a casino ... then it's a casino!

Huuuge Casino, Big Fish Casino, and all the rest of these app companies need to be regulated just like regular casinos. And they need to be responsible for addiction counseling for the people—like me—who they have preyed upon and ruined.

I look forward to telling you more about my experience next week.

Sincerely,

P.M.

48 year old resident of Puyallup, WA